

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 13636 201301Z
ACTION EUR-12

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CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-07 TRSE-00
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INFO USMISSION NATO PRIORITY
USNMR SHAPE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 13636

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG PARM NATO GW US
SUBJECT: PRM-10 AND FORWARD DEFENSE: GENSCHER URGES
CLARIFICATION FROM USG

REF: BONN 13609 DTG 191829Z AUG 77

SUMMARY. FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER BELIEVES THAT
THE PUBLIC IMPACT OF THE CONTINUING DEBATE OVER US
STRATEGIC INTENTIONS IS "DEVASTATING" AND THAT IT WOULD
BE DESIRABLE FOR WASHINGTON TO ISSUE A HIGH-LEVEL
CLARIFICATION. END SUMMARY.

1. STATE SECRETARY VAN WELL TOLD ME THIS MORNING THAT
FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER HAD JUST CALLED HIM TO EXPRESS
HIS CONCERN AT THE RENEWED PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND DEBATE
OVER US STRATEGIC INTENTIONS. ACCORDING TO VAN WELL,
GENSCHER FEELS THAT THE PUBLIC IMPRESSION WHICH HAS BEEN
CREATED IS "DEVASTATING."

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2. GENSCHER'S FEAR, VAN WELL SAID, IS THAT LEFTIST
POLITICAL FORCES WILL USE THE CURRENT CONTROVERSY AS A
WEAPON FOR TRYING TO FORCE A SPEED-UP IN NEGOTIATIONS ON
MBFR AND OTHER DISARMAMENT MATTERS IN AN UNDESIRABLE
DIRECTION. GENSCHER HAD ASKED VAN WELL TO TELL ME HE
THOUGHT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE FOR WASHINGTON TO ISSUE
A CLARIFICATION AT A "HIGH LEVEL."

3. COMMENT: CONTINUING PLAY IN THE GERMAN PRESS BEARS OUT GENSCHER'S CONCERN OVER RENEWED PUBLIC DEBATE. ILLUSTRATIVE IS A FAIRLY WELL BALANCED FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE IN THIS MORNING'S GENERAL ANZEIGER, WHICH CARRIES THE MAIN HEADLINE, "NATO STICKS BY 'FORWARD DEFENSE'," BUT WITH THE SUBHEADING, "HARSH CRITICISM BY THE BONN (COALITION) PARTIES OF PENTAGON STUDY." THE ARTICLE, DATELINED BOTH BONN AND BRUSSELS, REPORTS CONGRESSMAN ASPIN'S PUBLICATION OF A PENTAGON STUDY WHICH SHOWS THAT HIS EARLIER CALCULATION THAT AN ADDITIONAL \$48 BILLION WOULD BE NEEDED FOR FORWARD DEFENSE HAD BEEN CORRECTED TO \$30 BILLION. THE ARTICLE THEN STATES THAT, ACCORDING TO NATO MILITARY CIRCLES, THE LATTER FIGURE CORRESPONDS TO THE APPROXIMATELY THREE PERCENT INCREASE IN DEFENSE EXPENDITURES WHICH WAS AGREED AT THE LAST NATO SUMMIT.

4. AFTER NOTING THAT A DEFENSE MINISTRY SPOKESMAN YESTERDAY DECLARED THAT FORWARD DEFENSE REMAINS A PERMANENT PART OF NATO STRATEGY, THE ARTICLE ALSO CITES REMARKS BY DEFENSE SPOKESMEN FROM THE TWO COALITION PARTIES. SPD BUNDESTAG DEPUTY HORN IS QUOTED AS CRITICIZING THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT FOR CASTING DOUBT ON THE BASIS FOR THE WESTERN ALLIANCE. THE DEFENSE SPOKESMAN OF THE FDP PARLIAMENTARY GROUP, MOELLEMANN, CONFIDENTIAL

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REPORTEDLY WARNED OF THE NEGATIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF A CONTINUING DISCUSSION OF FORWARD DEFENSE AND OF GIVING UP WITHOUT A FIGHT A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC. STOESEL

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